



**VIRGINIA HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE**  
1642 State Farm Blvd., Charlottesville, VA 22911  
434-977-8475 / 434-977-5943 (fax)  
[www.vhsl.org](http://www.vhsl.org)

*The Virginia High School League is an alliance of Virginia's public high schools and non-boarding private schools that promotes education, leadership, sportsmanship, character and citizenship for students by establishing and maintaining high standards for school activities and competitions.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
September 23, 2015

CONTACT: Mike McCall, 434-977-8475  
[mmccall@vhsl.org](mailto:mmccall@vhsl.org)

## **VHSL Executive Director Ken Tilley announces his retirement**

*Tilley is the longest tenured state high school association administrator in the country and has served as the VHSL executive director since 1994*

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA** — The Virginia High School League is announcing Executive Director Ken Tilley will retire at the end of this school year after serving as executive director since 1994. The longest tenured state high school association administrator in the country, at the time of his retirement on June 30, 2016, Tilley will have served 40 years and eight months, including 22 years as executive director.

Tilley, who will complete 30 years of service with the VHSL, joined the VHSL staff in February, 1986 as program supervisor. Prior to joining the VHSL, he was on the staff at the North Carolina High School Athletic Association from 1975-86.

Among the innovative programs that have occurred under his leadership are a nationally renowned Student Leaders Conference, expanded corporate partnerships and the VHSL Foundation endowment, coaches education and professional development, greatly expanded playoff programs and annual scholarship opportunities for deserving students.

"I've been blessed to have enjoyed a career that allowed me to work with and alongside so many people who were dedicated to serving the best interests of student athletes and activities participants," said Tilley. "Some of my favorite memories include watching the large number of incredible athletes that Virginia has produced as well as the most recent event, our inaugural Film Festival, where amazing students created works ranging from animation to documentary to commercial/PSA.

"With the tremendous support of the VHSL staff, executive committee, principals and athletic administrators, coaches, officials, media, medical professionals and others, I'm so proud of what was accomplished during my 30 years with the League and truly believe the best is yet to come."

"With Ken Tilley's retirement, the nation loses its fourth longest serving current state executive director," said NFHS Executive Director Bob Gardner. "Ken earned the respect of his colleagues with his leadership on several national committees including strategic planning for the NFHS. He is an ardent advocate for student participation in athletics and activities and will be missed in Virginia and the nation."

"In his 22 years as executive director and 30 plus overall years, Ken Tilley has been a selfless service leader to the students of Virginia," said VHSL Executive Committee Chairman and Mountain View High School Principal Jim Stemple. "Through his leadership, the VHSL office is recognized as one of the strongest high school leagues in the

nation. His dedication to the student-athletes and activities participants of Virginia is second to none and his legacy of leadership will live on for many years beyond his retirement. On behalf of all the principals in Virginia I say, "Thank you," and wish Ken all the best in his retirement and look forward to celebrating his contributions in his final year as executive director."

Significant VHSL achievements and accomplishments under Tilley's leadership include:

- ❖ New governance (current structure – 1995-96)
- ❖ Appeals process revised (1995)
- ❖ Craig Wood retained as legal counsel (1995)
- ❖ Strong staff hires (12 new administrators)
- ❖ Strategic Planning (first initiative undertaken and six iterations total)
- ❖ New programs (expansion even before Six Classifications) included Boys Volleyball; Competitive Cheer; Scholastic Bowl; Girls Golf; Boys and Girls Lacrosse; Film Festival; Regional Publications Championships; a Debate team championship and Student Congress; new events in Debate and Forensics; and expanded opportunities in Swim/Dive, Boys and Girls Soccer, Indoor Track and Field Hockey
- ❖ Development/Sponsorships (totaling more than \$7 million)
- ❖ VHSL Foundation (assets totaling more than \$1.4 million, with reimbursements to schools exceeding \$188,000.00)
- ❖ Six Classification structure (expanded division play phased in before 2013-14)
- ❖ Student Leaders Conference (nationally renowned program began in April 1997)
- ❖ Scholarships/Recognitions (22 scholarships for students currently)
- ❖ National presence (staff alone have served on 28 NFHS committees and boards as well as frequently contributing as speakers and moderators at conferences)
- ❖ Technology (web site, Weekly Update and School/Media Advisories, social media and NFHS Network)
- ❖ Relationships strengthened with affiliate organizations
- ❖ Lobbyist retained to foster improved presence with General Assembly
- ❖ Staff Retreat provides for annual review and planning
- ❖ Membership now includes private schools
- ❖ Centennial Celebration (100 years of service acknowledged)
- ❖ Participant Safety initiatives (VHSL physical form served as national model, weight control program, mandatory steroids education, mandatory concussion education, limited contact in football, first state to ban use of energy drinks, fall practice guidelines protocol, required Emergency Action Plans)
- ❖ Enhanced opportunities and programs for students with disabilities

A formal announcement of the vacancy and specific information about the replacement process will be determined in the coming weeks.

Tilley, a native of Norfolk, earned his Bachelors of Arts degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is a retired United States Naval Reserve officer.

-VHSL-